

*Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0303D) in November 2000. DOE held public meetings on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement in North Augusta, South Carolina, on January 9, 2001, and in Columbia, South Carolina, on January 11, 2001. The public comment period ended on January 23, 2001. DOE received 18 letters on the Draft EIS. Court reporters documented comments and statements made during two public meetings, at which eight individuals asked questions, provided comments, or made statements. These comments have been addressed in the Final EIS and the comments, along with DOE's responses, are given in Appendix D of this EIS. The major points and DOE's responses are discussed at the end of this Summary.

EC

## S.4 Purpose and Need

DOE needs to reduce human health and safety risks at and near the HLW tanks, and to reduce the eventual introduction of contaminants into the environment. If DOE does not take action after bulk waste removal, the tanks would fail and contaminants would be released to the environment. Failed tanks would present the risk of accidents to individuals and could lead to surface subsidence, which could open the tanks to intrusion by water or plants and animals. Release of contaminants to the environment would present human health risks, particularly to individuals who might use contaminated water, in addition to adverse impacts to the environment.

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## S.5 Decisions to be Based on This EIS

This EIS provides an evaluation of the environmental impacts of several alternatives for closure of the HLW tanks at SRS. The closure process will take place over a period of up to 30 years. The EIS provides the decision makers with an assessment of the environmental, health, and safety effects of each alternative. The selection of one or more tank closure alternatives, following completion of this EIS, will guide the selection and implementation of a closure method for each HLW tank at SRS.

TC

Within the framework of the selected alternative(s), and the environmental impact of closure described in the EIS, DOE will select and implement a specific closure method for each tank. | TC

In addition to the closure methods and impacts described in this EIS, the tank closure program will operate under a number of laws, regulations, and regulatory agreements. In addition to the General Closure Plan (a document prepared by DOE and based on responsibilities under the AEA and other laws and regulations and approved by SCDHEC), the closure of individual tanks will be performed in accordance with a tank-specific Closure Module. Each Closure Module will incorporate a specific plan for tank closure and modeling of impacts based on that plan. Through the process of preparing and approving each Closure Module, DOE will select a closure method that is consistent with the alternative(s) selected after completion of this EIS. The aggregate environmental impacts of closing all the tanks would be equal to or less than those described in this EIS. | TC

During the expected 30-year period of tank closure activities, new technologies for tank cleaning or other aspects of the closure process may become available. In a tank-specific Closure Module, DOE would evaluate the technical, regulatory, and performance implications of any new technology. | TC

## S.6 Proposed Action and Alternatives

DOE proposes to close the HLW tanks at SRS in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, DOE Orders, and the *Industrial Wastewater Closure Plan for F- and H-Area High-Level Waste Tank Systems* approved by SCDHEC, which specifies the management of residuals as waste incidental to reprocessing. The proposed action evaluated in this EIS would begin when bulk waste removal has been completed. Under each alternative except No Action, DOE would close 49 HLW tanks and associated waste handling equipment including evaporators, pumps, diversion boxes, and transfer lines.